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# STREETVIBES

ADVOCATING JUSTICE • BUILDING COMMUNITY

## 3CDC Accused of Racial Conspiracy

Metropole tenants sue to stop eviction

By COREY GIBSON  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC) is using strong-arm tactics to force people from the Metropole Apartments, according to a civil-rights lawsuit filed Aug. 18 in federal court.

The complaint by the Metropole Tenants Association alleges 3CDC used Cincinnati Police officers to harass and intimidate residents. The complaint also alleges that the sale of the subsidized low-income apartment building was deceptively conducted, violates federal housing law and will promote racial segregation.

Defendants in the suit include 3CDC, the city of Cincinnati, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the new management of the Metropole Apartments. Attorneys for the plaintiffs are Terence Brennan and Jennifer Kinsley.

The Metropole Apartments are a racially integrated housing complex. Approximately 60 percent of the tenants are African Americans, a majority of whom are elderly or disabled. The 230-unit building, whose tenants receive federal Section 8 assistance with rent, has been one of the only affordable housing projects in the downtown area since 1971.

**The lawsuit accuses 3CDC of deliberately eliminating low-income housing from downtown Cincinnati to make room for upscale, predominantly white residents, in direct violation of both the national and state Fair Housing Acts, both of which call for the development of housing that will racially integrate communities.**

The Metropole offers the only racially integrated low-income housing downtown, yet residents are being forced out to make way for a chic, up-scale hotel.

Downtown is one of only three communities in Hamilton County that has been racially integrated

for over 30 years, according to the lawsuit. Yet for the past 10 years 3CDC, HUD and the city “have actively and deliberately sought to dismantle, displace or eliminate affordable housing from downtown Cincinnati,” the lawsuit says.

See **Metropole**, p. 4



Attorney Terence Brennan SAYS 3CDC is working to segregate downtown. *Brad Foster.*

## Canada’s Forgotten Children

The traumatic legacy of  
Indian residential schools

By ALLAN SHEPPARD  
STREET NEWS SERVICE



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine waits in the foyer of the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Canada. *REUTERS/Chris Wattie.*

**E**dmonton, Canada – The Canadian residential schools system was designed to assimilate Aboriginal children into westernized society. Many of them suffered psychological, physical and sexual abuse. Some 15 years since the last school was closed, victims are still in search of justice. The Edmonton Street Society is committed to help Canada’s forgotten children.

Harold Robinson, an adjudicator of cases involving victims’

compensation, recently discussed the issue.

“The area that I propose to talk about tonight is extremely sensitive. It is sourced in nothing but pain and anguish; it has had an absolutely devastating impact on whole generations of people.

“I approach the work remembering the teachings of my granny and of my mother, who raised me: to be respectful, to be a good listener, to be helpful, and I try and apply those principles in the work that I do as an adjudicator.

See **Abuse**, p. 6



## By The Numbers

### Zip

The cost, in dollars, for producing your own TV show, radio program or film at Media Bridges (see page 3).

### 250,000

The size of the exhibition space, in square feet, at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. (see page X).

### 2003

The year Keith Banner and Bill Ross founded Visionaries and Voices (see page 15).

### 42

The length, in number of days, that Gen. James Dozier was held captive by the Red Brigades (see page X).

### 100,000

The average amount of compensation, in dollars, paid to victims of abuse at Indian residential schools in Canada (see page 1).

### 21,000

The number of members of Secret Cincinnati's Facebook group (see page 10).

### 2014

The year the new health-care reform finally takes full effect (see page 13).

### 230

The number of units of affordable housing lost to 3CDC's takeover of the Metropole Apartments (see page 1).

### 700

The estimated number of hours that Michael Fanning has spent watching Star Wars (see page 9).

### 1967

The year Carl Yastrzemski achieved professional baseball's triple crown (see page 12).

# Streetwise

By GREGORY FLANNERY  
EDITOR

## Some Losses Are Happy Occasions

One of our most durable vendors, Riccardo Taylor, won't be selling *Streetvibes* for the next year – and we're glad. Taylor is now civil-rights outreach coordinator for the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless, a position funded by the federal Volunteers in Service to America program. The rules of the program forbid participants from simultaneously holding other jobs. We hope, however, that Taylor will continue "Street Life," his occasional column for *Streetvibes*.

Among Taylor's new duties will be organizing a Homeless Congress in Cincinnati, a forum for homeless people to work together in their mutual interest. Taylor succeeds Rob Goeller, who spent his tenure organizing tenants at the Metropole Apartments (see "3CDC Accused of Racial Conspiracy," page 1).

As a *Streetvibes* vendor, Taylor developed a regular clientele by virtue of his hard work, pleasant manner and straight talk. In recent years he has helped to train new *Streetvibes* vendors. We're going to miss his sales, but we're glad to know he'll be working to defend the civil rights of people who are homeless.

## Some Losses Are a Decade Late

It seems Cincinnati Police Chief Thomas Streicher Jr. will retire next year. Let all the people say, "Amen." Under Streicher's leadership, the Cincinnati Police Department has far too often been characterized by brutality, racism, disdain for the public and poor morale, exacerbated by mayors and city councils either too insensitive to the harm he caused or too afraid to deal with it.

The police department has undergone meaningful reform in recent years, in spite of Streicher – indeed, against his active resistance, and only at the cost of an uprising in Over-the-Rhine in 2001, followed by years of monitoring by federal court and judicially mandated changes in the police department's use of force. At one point Streicher's disrespect nearly landed the city in contempt of court before a federal judge. Employed by a city government too craven to deal with him, Streicher, a man lacking respect either for his office or for the people he is sworn to serve, stayed on the job a decade after he was no longer wanted. Along the way he helped make the city and the police department an object of national scorn. The only thing more shameful than the record of Police Chief Thomas Streicher Jr. is the city's refusal to protect their constituents from the damage that he caused.

## Some Losses Defy Categories

A local TV news station recently reported the death of "four NATO members in Afghanistan." The phrasing is curious for what it does not say: These weren't people who belonged to a club. They were soldiers. Invaders.

By the time this edition is printed, a young friend of mine will have landed in Afghanistan, where he will build bombs for the U.S. Air Force. His poetry has appeared in *Streetvibes* and in SOS Art. He joined the Air Force in order to secure college tuition – if he survives the war. He does not support the war, he says. By that he means he does not agree with the idea of the war. But he builds bombs. Nothing could be more supportive.

A few years ago, the night before a jury deliberated whether some friends and I had committed the offense of trespassing during an anti-war protest, my family hosted a young man who was on the run. He had refused to go on a second tour of duty in the war on Iraq. He later turned himself in and was given a choice: Prison or combat. He chose combat and came back with one eye and other vital parts missing.

Every generation has to learn again: War is always a bad idea.

## Some Losses Can Be Stopped

Ohio is getting ready to poison another prisoner. Kevin Keith is scheduled to be killed Sept. 15. His last chance seems to be an order of clemency by Gov. Ted Strickland. A surprising line-up of opponents to the execution hope to sway him. They include more than 30 former state and federal judges and prosecutors, the Ohio Innocence Project, the National Innocence Network, more than 100 religious leaders and organizations and 13 leading experts on eyewitness and memory – some of whom support the use of the death penalty in principle, but say Keith should not be executed. Two petitions bearing more than 20,000 signatures also call on Strickland to stop the execution.

Among those calling for clemency are former U.S. Appeals Judge Nathaniel R. Jones, former Ohio Attorney General Jim Petro and former Ohio Supreme Court Justice Herbert R. Brown.

Keith, 46, was convicted of murdering two women and a 4-year-old girl in Bucyrus in 1994. Keith's attorneys say new evidence shows Keith was wrongfully convicted based on faulty and improperly influenced eyewitness identification. The new evidence identifies an alternative suspect, who told a police informant that he was paid to carry out the crime.

The main evidence used to wrongfully convict Keith was the eyewitness identification of a surviving adult victim, who identified Keith after telling at least four people he couldn't see the shooter's face because the shooter was wearing a mask.

The Ohio Parole Board unanimously voted against recommending clemency Aug. 19.

**Streetvibes** is an activist newspaper, advocating justice and building community. *Streetvibes* reports on economic issues, civil rights, the environment, the peace movement, spirituality and the struggle against homelessness and poverty. Distributed by people who are or once were homeless, in exchange for a \$1 donation, *Streetvibes* is published twice a month by the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless.

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# 8 MINUTES

with a  
**High Tech Megaphone**

Media Bridges puts media into the hands of the community

By MARGO PIERCE  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

We have the right to free speech in this country, but unless you have the cash to pay for the expensive gadgets to broadcast your speech, your options for communicating are limited. Enter Media Bridges ([www.mediabridges.org](http://www.mediabridges.org)).

"We exist to give you a voice," says Christa Zielke, development coordinator for Media Bridges. "If you have something to say, a talent to share, an argument to make, if you have an event that you filmed that you think is important to air – we're here to make that happen."

"We'll give you the tools. We'll give you the education. We'll give you the facilities, whether it's on film, video, the Internet, radio, whatever form of media. (Media Bridges) is a community media center. These exist all over the country, and the purpose of community media centers is to provide the public with the ability to create and produce their own independent, community media productions."

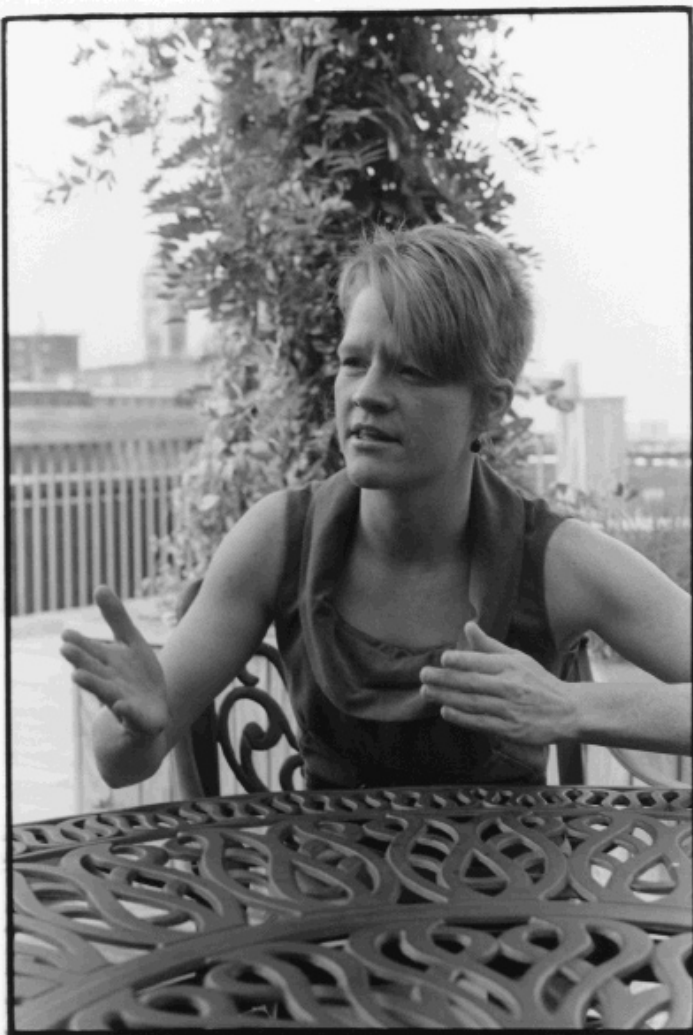
Zielke says the organization is a "big, fierce advocate of the First Amendment." The community center offers cost-free classes in videography, digital photography, editing, studio use and graphic design – anything that will enable individuals to create media.

"Then we also provide ... free equipment – cameras, video cameras, lighting, audio," Zielke says. "The only caveat is that they provide us with a copy of their final product, which we then air on the four cable-access stations that we operate."

In addition to managing the four local community-access cable channels, Media Bridges launched a new radio station, WVQC, in July. All locally produced programming can be heard on 94.7 FM and [www.wvqc.org](http://www.wvqc.org). Feedback on the new endeavor has been "great," according to Zielke. While she's pleased about this, she's not surprised.

Describing local programming on most local radio stations as "homogenized," Zielke says the "corporate media conglomerates" that own more than 80 percent of local radio stations – with 50 percent of those owned by just two companies – rely on opinion surveys to guide their content, virtually eliminating the possibility of home-grown programs.

"We've got a variety of programs on there, from a veteran benefits program to LGBT programming to Goth and industrial music to local music to Hemp Rock – a marijuana legalization advocacy – so it's pretty



Christa Zielke says Media Bridges helps people overcome the digital divide.  
Jon Hughes/Photopresse.

diverse," Zielke says.

## The influence of grassroots media

This is important because it means local issues get attention and can influence the mainstream media. Local cable access channels provide one vehicle for sharing ideas. On community access channels 4, 8, 15 and 24, the viewing public can see locally produced television shows and stories.

"There's a gentleman who did a program on the money lending practices of some of these check-cashing and financial loaning institutions that are prevalent in low-income communities," Zielke says. "He did this story a year before it ever hit any of the mainstream. This was happening in his neighborhood ... something that was important to him. Sometimes what's important to mainstream media isn't always what is closest to the heart of neighborhoods. ..."

"Look at a neighborhood like Over-the-Rhine. This neighborhood has amazing breadth of arts agencies and activist and activity and community centers and schools. So much happening ... that's not going to get as much attention as, 'There was a shooting on 13th street. Two people

died.' "

Located at 1100 Race St., Media Bridges chose to move to Over-the-Rhine in 2001 after the uprising against police violence in that neighborhood.

"We wanted to be where we were needed the most," Zielke says. "You hear a lot about the digital divide, which is the gap between the haves and have-nots in terms of access to technology. Broadcast education is expensive. You're talking about a \$40,000 degree to go get the skills to be able to create and edit your own production, your own show. Most people in this community – at least a lot of them – do not have those kinds of financial resources."

Funded in large part by the Community Access Preservation (CAP) Act, which set up a fund requiring cable companies to pay for their use of public land to run cables and other private industry equipment, Media Bridges has a 15-year contract with the city of Cincinnati to operate four community access cable stations. However, private funding in the form of grants, individual donations and other resources cover the cost of the FM radio stations, education classes and other programs.

The Alliance for Community Media ([www.alliancecm.org](http://www.alliancecm.org))

provides a great deal of information, including updates to the CAP act and related congressional action and local media centers including Media Bridges.

## The First Amendment rules

It's difficult to list and describe all the classes and programs Media Bridges operates throughout the year, but one of the most popular is the kids' camps.

"The kids have an enthusiasm for film and media and music production that you don't see with anybody else. We want to do this movie about aliens where Elvis comes in and then a space ship comes and then there's a monster in a mansion ... it's awesome," Zielke says. "Because kids grew up with technology ... these kids came out of the womb with a cell phone and a video cam and an iPod and a laptop. They have this innate understanding and capacity to pick up technology like you wouldn't believe. When you give them a little bit of the theory and technique behind that, it's amazing what they can do."

"This summer we had Oscar-nominated film director. His name is Steven Bogner ... producer of a film that was nominated for an Oscar this past year called *The Last Truck: Closing of a GM Plant*. He led a two-week class called Independent Film Bootcamp. We had a bunch of teens from all over the city to create their own film. They then screened it over at Memorial Hall over on Elm Street, and it was a damn good film! It was a thriller/suspense/drama ... It was really exciting to watch that process take place."

Media Bridges doesn't edit or censor programs that are produced by the community. They advise the producers of their legal responsibilities and refer all complaints and compliments back to the individuals responsible for the programming. They serve as a vehicle for communication; they don't play Big Brother.

"We have a very strong commitment to the First Amendment, and that is reflected in how we operate our cable access stations; that is, you submit it, we'll air it," Zielke says. "We do ask that if it's inappropriate for children, red-flag it for us and we'll put it on between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. Otherwise, anything that the community wants to put on there, we feel they have the right to put on there."

Many people work hard to make a difference for the less privileged in the Queen City. "Eight Minutes" is an opportunity to learn who those people are and what motivates them to be a positive influence. Margo Pierce can be contacted at [www.writerdiva.com](http://www.writerdiva.com).



# 3CDC Accused of Racial Conspiracy

Continued from page 1

## 'Racial steering'

The Metropole Apartments meet a critical need for low-income housing downtown, according to the lawsuit. That is one of several reasons the sale of the building should be stopped, Brennan says.

"Federal law requires that they not allow conversion of housing that is subsidized by a HUD-backed mortgage, which the Metropole was, when there is still a need for low income affordable housing in the area," he says. "The city and any number of entities in this case have actually documented there is a need for HUD's permission. To allow these developers to go forward the way they have is a violation of the national housing law."

Congress passed the National Housing Act of 1937 "to remedy ... the acute shortage of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for low-income families." Yet 3CDC, HUD and the city of Cincinnati are trying to get rid of the last affordable housing in the downtown area, according to the complaint. Congress has also stated that the national housing policy has "not directed sufficient attention and resources to preservation of existing housing and neighborhoods" and that, if the national housing goal of a decent home and suitable living environment for every family is to be achieved, "a greater effort must be made to encourage the preservation of existing housing and neighborhoods."

Congress has also stated that HUD, local governments that receive federal aid and private developers must promote housing that furthers racial integration – the opposite of what will result from the loss of the Metropole Apartments.

On May 26, 2009, the owners of the Metropole, Showe Builders Inc., sold the building to 3CDC for \$6.25 million. 3CDC plans to convert the apartments into a boutique hotel with a restaurant and modern art museum, a project that will cost an estimated \$48 million. Two months after the sale, tenants received a letter from Showe Builders saying they should not worry about false information claiming the owners were "negotiating for a possible sale of the building." The letter also said

the tenants would "receive at least a one-year notice in writing" if the sale were approved. The tenants were lied to and kept in the dark about the sale of their homes, according to the lawsuit. The tenants received no notice of the sale until after it had been finalized.

HUD approved the sale of the building, the transfer of its housing-assistance contract and a relocation plan for the residents without a hearing to allow for tenants' input. HUD also failed to conduct any type of analysis on whether granting the approval would have an adverse effect on the racial integration or on people with disabilities or hinder fair-housing opportunities in the city. By approving

the sale of the Metropole and not conducting any analysis on the outcome of the sale, HUD is in direct violation of the Fair Housing Act, Brennan says.

The Fair Housing Act requires HUD to prevent the sale of property if it promotes racial segregation. But HUD has allowed 3CDC to displace the tenants of the Metropole for the sole purpose of building a hotel that will allegedly promote racial segregation.

"The relocation plan that has been put in place is change tantamount to racial steering," Brennan says. "The residents by and large (have) been shown possible places for them to move that are in racially segregated neighborhoods, in housing that's racially segregated. All these are violation of the Fair Housing Act."

## Police intimidation

The lawsuit says 3CDC has repeatedly acted stop the tenants from voicing their opinion. During a meeting between tenants and 3CDC on Nov. 4, 2009, one of the tenants attempted to bring two advocates into the meeting. But Cincinnati Police officers stopped the advocates at the entrance of the building (see "Metropole Tenants Tell 3CDC: 'Hell No, We won't Go,'" issue of Nov. 15-30, 2009). 3CDC had requested the presence of the police to "keep housing advocates out of the meeting," the lawsuit says.

At that meeting, 3CDC announced plans to relocate the tenants. When tenants attempted to challenge

the relocation, they were allegedly "berated" by 3CDC. The lawsuit says 3CDC violated tenants' right to organize freely, to associate freely with one another and with legal counsel and to be assisted by housing advocates. The use of the police to intimidate tenants and suppress their efforts to have advocates attend the meeting are all violations of their rights, the lawsuit says.



Residents protested the sale of the Metropole Apartments in Nov. 2009.  
Clarissa Peppers

The complaint says 3CDC has routinely used police officers for intimidation when demanding access to tenants' apartments without notice. One account, by Robert Wavre, head of the Metropole Tenants Association, says a police officer who frequently accompanied management verbally accosted him for displaying a sign protesting the displacement.

"This same officer accosted plaintiff Robert Wavre while both were riding a bus, screaming repeatedly at him that she would 'knock his block off,'" the complaint says.

The tenants' attorneys say 3CDC's relocation plan is "unfair and deceptive." 3CDC promised tenants that the "relocation program will insure that tenants' monthly rent will not increase and all related moving expenses will be covered," that each tenant would receive assistance and that 3CDC would "ensure that the relocation plan ... (will) ultimately result in improved, higher-quality living conditions."

With little exception, none of these promises have been fulfilled, the attorneys say. Tenants have been shown apartments in segregated neighborhoods, often in high-crime areas with little transportation or job opportunities. 3CDC has also contradicted some of the previous statements, saying only some of the moving costs will be covered, the rent might increase and that one-on-one assistance from 3CDC might not be provided, according to the complaint. One of the defendants, Model

Group/Brickstone Properties, managers of the Metropole Apartments, are providing the relocation services. The tenants' lawsuit accuses the company of conspiring with 3CDC to steer tenants into housing that it owns or manages. The lawsuit says 3CDC and Model Group/Brickstone Properties have devised a scheme to make even more money out of the eviction of the tenants by making them move: As a result, 3CDC gets a new hotel, and Model Group/Brickstone Properties finds tenants to fill its apartments.

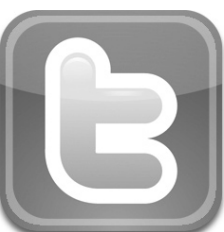
The complaint quotes an unidentified but "prominent" businessman who lobbied the Louisville-based 21c Museum Hotel chain to invest in redeveloping the Metropole: "You can't have those types of places across the street from the Aronoff Center. It's like parking a Bentley on 14th and Main and expecting the Bentley to still be there."

The lawsuit accuses 3CDC of deliberately eliminating low-income housing from downtown Cincinnati to make room for upscale, predominantly white residents, in direct violation of both the national and state Fair Housing Acts, both of which call for the development of housing that will racially integrate communities.

"The Metropole, which in itself is a racially integrated low-income housing resource, is going to be destroyed in the context of this desegregation of downtown into an upscale, predominantly white community of upscale housing," Brennan says. "And that, in America, where we don't allow segregation, where we protect people's civil rights as a free society – we are very confident that the courts will not allow this to stand."

Work on the new hotel is scheduled to start this fall. 3CDC has given the approximately 100 remaining tenants until Nov. 2 to move. At that time tenants' lawyers intend to ask a federal judge to stop the redevelopment project until further notice. The tenants are also going to seek a restraining order to stop the relocation process.

Kelly Leon, spokeswoman for 3CDC, declined to comment on the lawsuit. The local HUD office also declined to comment.



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# 3CDC and Death in Over-the-Rhine

By GREGORY FLANNERY  
EDITOR

The fences have gone up. Soon the dead will be removed from their graves. Soon dozens of trees will fall.

Welcome to Washington Park, now under the control of the Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. (3CDC).

The July 27 death of Joann Burton – crushed by a police car while lay she in the park grass – said best what residents of Over-the-Rhine have been saying all along: 3CDC is killing their community.

Last month the first fencing rose, segregating the north end of the park from residents, their swimming

pool and basketball court to be destroyed.

Construction of an underground parking garage requires the disinterment of residents long ago buried in what later became Washington Park.

3CDC plans to raze 59 trees, despite the protests of those who have long called the neighborhood park their

own.

Meanwhile on Aug. 6 relatives, friends and neighbors gathered for Burton's funeral at New Prospect Baptist Church. The photos, poetry and reflections on this page are dedicated to her memory. After her death, 3CDC asked Burton's family to move a small memorial erected near

the place of the accident that killed her.

Nothing will stop 3CDC's plan to make the park more palatable for the wealthy: Not old trees, not neighbors' protests, not the presence of human graves, not grief for a woman killed as she lay resting in a place where she and those like her are no longer welcome.



Visiting a memorial to Joann Burton are Mark Shears (left); her husband, Thomas Oats (second from left); and her son, Kenneth Burton (right). *Jon Hughes/Photopresse.*



Jerry Burton (left) helps carry his mother's casket. *Jon Hughes/Photopresse.*

## Destroy and Displace

By AUBREY BOWMAN  
STREETVIBES VENDOR

It will be sad.  
It will be shameful.

The destruction of Washington Park will be a destruction of history in that part of Over-the-Rhine.

First, I want to apologize for speaking out at this late stage, for I am a recent transplant to the city of Cincinnati (about eight or nine years).

I've learned the story of getting the Banks together, how long it's taking, all the political doubletalk; it's funny to me. Same old politics all over the country.

Alas, the powers left one thing out: The beginning of the end of the neighborhood near Cincinnati Music Hall and the surrounding streets: Elm Street, Race Street, 14th Street, etc. Sober minds would have picked the better choice for a parking garage on the west side of Music Hall – Central Parkway!

Access to freeways, more room for all the (new) traffic. This makes more sense to all sober-thinking politicians.

But these are the politicians of the 21st century.

"The street car will be in the way of the parking garage," is their thinking.

The total destruction of history and the displacement of people is the thought of these 21st-century politicians.

Hopefully the lawyers will make it another Banks controversy to slow down and/or stop this type of un-sober thinking.

## Joann

By MARLENA COOK

We lost our sister.  
Only God knows how much we miss her.  
Her heart is blessed.  
She doesn't have to take anymore of life's mess.  
God has her in his right hand.  
Joann more than just a sister  
A great friend.  
Even though the sun has set  
We will not forget, this is a part of God's plan.  
Joann not just a sister  
A great friend.  
She doesn't see anything but better days.  
In spite of the crazy way she left  
Black is never a sin always in Killin us has become a trend  
I won't break but I will bend.  
Rolled over by a cop car  
More than just a sister  
Now she's a shooting star.

## Park Poem

By PETER MCGROVER

What does a park mean to most people when we say the word "park"?  
I think for most of us a park, especially Washington Park, means a place to gather, spend time with friends and acquaintances, have fun, share joy, enjoy peace and maybe even meditate or play a few games of chess or checkers.  
Washington Park for most of us means a central gathering place in the heart of downtown Cincinnati and Over-the-Rhine. For those who use it and enjoy it on a regular basis, it means for them a public domain and public square to be enjoyed by all, not just a select few. Washington Park serves the public good and benefits the public as a whole. It must be continued to be enjoyed by all the people of Cincinnati who live in the city, whether it be on a regular basis or just passing through for the day. This park, especially Washington Park, begins with all the people of this city and brings peace, joy and mutual respect to the city. Let the city continue to relish this park and keep it for all the people to enjoy, not just a select few.

# Canda's Forgotten Children

Continued from page 1

"The rewarding thing about doing adjudication is, for the most part, at the end of a hearing, what I hear from claimants is, 'I feel better for having told my story to you.' Now, they feel better for getting it out, but it doesn't make their life any better.

"Claimants have sometimes waited 20, 30, 50, 60, 70 years to tell their stories. And so they've lived with hurt. They've lived with anger. They've lived with pain for that amount of time. It's a pain that doesn't dissipate. It's a pain that tends to build upon itself over time."

## The first travesty

"Just being taken away from your home, that is the first travesty. Everything builds from there. Regardless of whether anything bad or constructive or good happened at a residential school, there is still that first sin, I'll call it, of taking kids away from parents.

"What we explore through the residential school process is: How has that experience, being taken away from their family – how has the abuse that people have suffered at residential schools – affected their lives? We go through this list: How are you at relating to other people? How has this affected your ability to tell your spouse you love him? How has this affected your ability to hold your children? How has this affected your ability to tell your children you love them? How do you cope with nightmares? What do you do when someone reminds you of a priest or a nun or an employee? Usually what we end up talking about is people who feel anger, rage. Often I hear, 'I wish that so-and-so was here; I'd kill him.' That's real.

"I hear about how people drink, about how drugs have entered their lives. About how they would rather wake up in the morning and start drinking than have to think about or be reminded of the abuse or to think about how they can't relate to those closest to them, those who care about them most.

"So we look at all these consequential harms. According to the model, you get X-number of points (for each harm). It's a points system. And there's this horrible reverse/inverse relationship where the more points you get – i.e., the more screwed up your life is, the more damage that has been done – the more money you get. And in the grand scheme of things, it is not a lot of money; we're talking, on average, about 100, 150 thousand dollars, maybe.

"That's for a lifetime that has been damaged and wrecked, and that is for the lifetimes of others that have been exposed to

or have been in the same house as survivors. So we do a damage that goes beyond individuals. It really reaches out to families. It reaches out to communities. It reaches out over generations, which isn't surprising: The residential school has been around for over a hundred years."

## Three hard questions

"What I've learned in six years is there are three great commonalities. It doesn't matter what the story, the degree of abuse, how a claimant has managed to survive or persevere, they want to know three things:

1. "Why? The first question always is: Why? And it's not necessarily, 'Why was I abused?' It is, 'Why was I taken away from my family?' Who gave the government that right? And often what chokes claimants up the most is, they'll recount how their parents were just powerless; the Indian agent or a supervisor gave them no choice.

2. "Are you listening? The second thing everybody wants to know is: Are you listening? Do you hear me? And that is pointed directly to the adjudicator in the room. Because unless the adjudicator in the room hears and respects your story, then you're nowhere. So being able to reframe and convey the story is absolutely critical."

3. "Are you sorry? The third thing that just about every claimant on some level needs is to hear the word 'sorry.' Now that's not for me, as an adjudicator, to say, 'Sorry.' But we have sometimes representatives from the church and always a representative of Canada in the room. And very often, that representative – it might be a lawyer who's been at it for 20 or 30 years, long in the tooth and perhaps just as jaded as everybody else in the room – will give a heartfelt apology. And that, maybe more than just hearing the story perhaps goes as far, if not farther, than anything that I as an adjudicator might do on the day. That's the power of an apology, because, you know, to apologize effectively, you've got to look somebody in the eye. You've got to be empathetic. And you've got to mean it. And to mean it, you have to have heard the story. You have to embrace that individual and their harms to some degree. So, you know, the hearing experience is powerful, and the goal is to ensure that it's helpful.

## Treatment: A cone of silence

"Another part of the residential-school hearing process has to do with treatment, past treatment and future treatment. The hearing books are thick, and a good chunk of that has to do with doctors that they've seen, psychiatrists, or if they've been in corrections – sort of the daily log of their lives. You can have

a hearing book four inches thick and only have one or two pages where a doctor or a psychiatrist or somebody in corrections has had the foresight to ask, 'Have you been in residential school? Have your parents been in residential school? Have you come in contact with somebody who' gone to residential school?"

"And when the question is asked, the floodgates open, the gates into that person and explanations as to why the individual is (perhaps) the way they are – mistrustful, addicted to alcohol, unable to communicate – because in residential school they were hit over the head with a clapper every time they tried to speak their own damn language. Or they were told, 'If you tell anybody about this abuse, we're gonna get you.' Or just because the whole damn residential school experience, in general, was a pedophile's dream come true. There's a cone of silence there. People didn't talk for 30, 40, 50, 60 years. Because that cone of silence doesn't stop at the gates of residential school. It stays with them.

"The challenge is daunting. It's going to take a concerted effort. Whether it's a group of newspaper people, a group of psychiatrists, a group of police, a group of judges, doctors, how do we start (with them) or with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to focus the minds, the talents, and the resources of others to start asking that first critical question: Have you been to residential school? Do you know somebody who has? Have you been contact with, have you been raised by? You're not necessarily asking, 'Have you been abused by?' Because you're not going to get an answer to that. But just knowing whether somebody, either directly or on the periphery, has exposure: It's like radiation. It gives you a pretty good immediate sense of what the future actions should be or could be.

"Unless the question is asked, the cork stays in the bottle, and we're not getting the full story. It's like mapping a genome: You need the entire sequence in order to understand it. If we can equate this thing to a hundred-year disease, you've got to know the full mapping of the thing, so that you can battle it, so you can deal with it, so you can get some cures out there for it.

"I think that's why it's important to talk about it, even though it makes a lot of people uncomfortable.

"But we need to talk about it in the right way. This isn't some drive-by accident where you can express morbid curiosity in the thing and move on. It's got to be based in those principles that our mushums and kookums (grandfathers and grandmothers), moms and dads, taught us about being respectful, about wanting to be helpful, and using our talents as best we can."

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# Allegories of Oligarchies

Individualism is to individuals as Christianity is to Christians

By **DAVID HEITFIELD**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

*The following is an open letter to Pfc. Bradley Manning, who was arrested in May in connection with leaking a 2007 video showing a U.S. helicopter attack in Iraq that killed several civilians, including two reporters. Manning is under investigation as the source of other classified documents obtained by Wikileaks; he currently is in solitary confinement under suicide watch in Quantico, Va.*

Dear Bradass78:  
I think I love you.  
I guess now that the *New York Times* dragged you out of the closet – poor Midwestern boy alienated by his sexuality, first in Oklahoma then in the Army – I should qualify that my love for you is rooted in respect for your ballsy action, your youthful idealism and the pathos of shared experiences: was a Korean linguist in the Navy about 30 years ago.

So one of the things I’ve found most amusing about your story is the media-expressed horror that such a 22-year-old enlisted kid would have access to classified information. As we both know, you are the ideal candidate for this work: intelligent, young (the older you are, the more you’ve done that could be used as blackmail), single and lacking the social connections or economic status to find a more lucrative vocation.

Who else would do this work – in a war zone, no less - or under \$20k a year?

While I don’t remember the details, I recall having many conversations with people I worked with along the “What would the public do if they actually knew what was really going on?” hypothesis.

Back then, for instance, no one had any idea that the National Security Agency (NSA) dwarfed the CIA in budget and manpower or how many millions of dollars we spent on pointless war games – such as the annual war games that always cause the North Koreans to threaten retaliation. Or how we would deploy aircraft-carrier battle groups just to show the Russians we were badass.

During the Cold War, when nation-states still mattered a little, the government feared other governments, not news organizations. We would watch government-produced films about cunning Russian spies offering us a lot of money or blackmailing us over some personal character weakness. We were lectured about how some of the local Korean prostitutes were known North Korean spies who were happy to get the smallest amount of information, such as where you might be going for deployment.

I don’t recall anyone ever warning us about Walter Cronkite.

It was all a little surreal. So I well understand access to that information has a heady impact on youthful idealism, regardless of your politics or patriotism. It literally changes your perception of the world forevermore.

I recall the 1981 kidnapping of Gen. James Dozier by the Italian Red Brigades as a seminal moment of my youth (this information has long been in the public domain, so no secrets here). I don’t know how or why I had access to the intelligence – I worked on Far Eastern stuff, so I lacked a “need to know” any of it.

And yet I did, and I was amazed at how our information was so at odds with what was being widely reported in the media – namely, that the deputy chief of staff of NATO’s Southern European land forces was secluded in an unknown place by evil communist terrorists, and we were unable to do anything to secure his release. The media fed the “communists are evil and secretive and bad and you should be very, very scared” narrative so popular during the Cold War.

The fact was the Red Brigades “plumbers” who kidnapped the general were bumbling idiots, and we knew where he was every moment of his 42 days in captivity. It was all about the sausage-



**WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange published classified documents allegedly provided by Pfc. Bradley Manning. REUTERS/Scanpix Sweden.**

making of politics, something government would rather not have its subjects think about too much. The Italian government did not want to do anything and would not allow the U.S. to do anything. Political stalemate.

President Reagan then enlisted the help of his good buddy Ross Perot – yes, *that* Ross Perot – to use his “private forces” to rescue the general. Being the good patriot, Perot left Texas, and while flying to Italy, the Italians got wind of the effort and decided to do the rescue themselves to save face – and they got him without firing a single shot.

Dozier was pronounced a hero, the Italian government was strengthened from increased pride and confidence of its people, the Red Brigades were all but destroyed and Reagan got a bunch of roads named after him.

At your age, Brad, I was impressed by several things in that story: 1. Our intelligence-gathering is far more awesome than anyone was remotely aware; 2. Rich people are capable of amassing their own private armies at will; and, free of messy democratic accountability, apparently have more clout than Presidents; 3. The role of the “free press” is not to inform the public, but to reinforce the narrative of the ruling class.

So, Brad, your venal sin, for which you must be sacrificed, is revealing how the sausage is made. We don’t want confirmation of what we already know: The war is an abject failure and a senseless waste of money and lives; drone aircraft don’t work all that well, despite *60 Minutes* propaganda about how awesome it is; Pakistan sucks; Afghan police are drug-addled corrupt rapists; and civilians are being killed at an alarming rate, increasing the power and sympathies of the Taliban instead of suppressing it.

Thanks to the 24-hour news cycle, your story was already downplayed and discredited by the media and the White House soon after *Wikileaks* published some of the documents. It’s only classified “Secret,” it doesn’t tell us anything new and you’re just a confused young boy seeking attention because Mommy didn’t love you enough.

Unfortunately, you also fit into the most powerful narrative in America today: Everything is the fault of the bottom-feeders; those at the top of the food chain are always blameless. The unemployed are to blame for unemployment; the homeless are to blame for homelessness; welfare is to blame for poverty.

Positive psychology is the law of the land today: The cure for all the evils of the world is simply to change how you think about them. Got cancer? Focus on the positive and see it as a spiritual opportunity to be a role model! Middle-aged and unemployed? Time for a spiritual renewal!

Anger is a destructive emotion – get rid of it! If you’re depressed, we’ll give you some pills. All better now?

Our Brave New World is rapidly taking shape – although it’s not so much a government conspiracy as a cooperative conflation of corporate, academic, religious and government interests all serving the same master. Repeat the mantra: The top of the food chain is blameless. You have the power to make yourself happy or miserable. Jesus loves the winners.

Individualism today is all about your individual responsibility to conform to the will of the oligarchy.

Know that you’re not alone. The Obama administration has shown its propensity toward blaming the whistleblowers or sacrificing personnel who might cause bad press on *Fox News*. At least two other leakers have been punished: In May, FBI linguist Shamai Leobowitz was sentenced to 20 months in prison after pleading guilty to passing classified information to a blogger. In April, former NSA senior executive Thomas Drake was indicted on charges that he passed classified information to a reporter who wrote a series of articles about the NSA in 2007.

And that’s why this is a love letter, Brad. You saw something, it made you angry, you thought your fellow citizens should know about it. You thought about future consequences (not your own) instead of “living in the moment.” You were disturbed by what you knew, and you did something about it, instead of placating yourself with positive thinking.

Consciously or not, you had some idea that sacrifice and redemption are actual concepts that matter (to people and their institutions), that Prosperity Jesus is a sham, that liberty has nothing to do with either Glenn Beck’s bastardization of Thomas Paine or Obama’s hopenchange illusion.

Your epithet in modern America, in which the ideal of individualism is exalted while the value of the individual is rapidly becoming extinct, is probably best summed up by Marge Simpson, after her campaign against cartoon violence resulted in the town’s covering the genitals of Michelangelo’s David: “One person can make a difference ... but probably shouldn’t.”

Warm regards,

Dave  
*Former military analyst  
Current unemployed lawyer and  
positive-thinking meditator*



# “Feed Me, Seymour, Feed Me All Night Long...”



Jeni Jenkins.

By JENI JENKINS  
STAFF WRITER

This simple dish was created while trying to decide what to do with a giant bowl of leftover steamed rice. I searched the cupboard and fridge for ingredients that would do, and thought, “Well, this could work.” To my surprise, this was delish. It was so good that my kids devoured two servings each – and believe me, they are a tough crowd. According to my kids, this will now be a regular meal in our dinner rotation. Serve as a side dish or main dish. Enjoy!

## Creamy Baked Rice

Serving Size: 3-4 bellies

2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 tablespoons minced garlic  
1 chopped white or yellow onion  
2 stalks celery, sliced  
2 cups vegetable broth  
1 can cream of mushroom soup  
1 cup sour cream  
4 cups leftover long grain rice

- In a skillet, sauté onion, celery and garlic in olive oil over medium heat for 3-4 minutes.
- Pre-heat oven at 325 degrees.
- Add broth and soup and bring to a boil. Simmer for a few minutes, then slowly stir in sour cream, adding a tablespoon at a time.
- Spread rice in shallow baking dish.
- Pour creamy sauce over rice, spreading equally, making sure to cover every grain.
- Bake at 325 for 20 minutes or until hot and bubbly.
- Voila, FEED!





# Reel Life: A Film Fanatic's Journey

But don't get me started on George Lucas

By **MICHAEL FANNING**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I like movies. A lot. I know more about Ann Archer than I do my own sister. I'm the kind of guy who watches the three-hour "making-of" bonus DVDs for films that don't warrant them, like Porky's II. I closely monitor Wikipedia to make sure they're getting the bits about my favorite obscure actors right. (Can you believe Graham Beckel's profile didn't mention *Jennifer 8?* Jesus!) Additions, alterations and deletions are made accordingly.

Every year my heart breaks when the Oscars run the remembrance reel of whichever actors died the previous year. This is typically when I find out which of my obscure favorites has passed away (the newspapers rarely run it). Sometimes the Oscars themselves forget to mention them. I only recently found out that Brion James, one of the replicants in *Blade Runner*, died a decade ago! "Time to die," I can hear him saying. I lit a candle.

This is all George Lucas's fault, you understand. It all started May 25, 1977, the release date for *Star Wars*. No, I didn't need to look it up. I've seen *Star Wars* more times than I care to mention (300+). In my youth, it was my very religion. As far as worship goes, Jesus Christ was fifth on my list, behind Walrus Man.

If I had spent as much time reading books as I did watching *Star Wars* as a kid, I could be directing condescending glances toward Steven Hawking. If I've seen *Star Wars* more than 300 times, that adds up to something like 700 hours. That's a month, my friends. And here's the kicker: Only in the past few years have I thought this might have been a waste of time.

## No time to bleed

Movies affect my everyday existence in subtle ways. For example, I remember events, chronologically, by what movies came out the same year. It sounds oddly Native American if I say it out loud. My cousin, Mark, for instance, was born in the year of *The Falcon and the Snowman*. My niece, Sarah, was born in the year of *The Ghost and the Darkness*. I sound like I'm Cherokee.

I carried a picture of Ridley

Scott in my wallet when I was in my teens. I'm not kidding. He made films like *Legend*, *Blade Runner* and *Alien*, which are still unmatched in their ability to transport you to another place. This was something I often needed in my childhood. You never feel like you're looking at sets or props when you watch these films, but rather the real deal. Of course, these days Scott has switched to making films for mass appeal rather than artistic merit, (viz. *Matchstick Men*, *Blackhawk Down* and *Kingdom of Heaven*) which brings me to another point.

Everyone knows that certain talents and abilities fade over time, but nowhere is this more egregiously conspicuous than in the medium of filmmaking. Francis Ford Coppola, auteur of *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now* is also the creator of *Jack and Dracula*. Spielberg's *The Terminal* and *War of the Worlds* left me vomiting for months. And George Lucas is king of them all. Not only did he inflict the *Star Wars* prequels upon us (Darth Vader was never a whining Canadian) but only after he went back to his earlier glorious efforts and fucked them up from the inside out. *Nihilo sanctum estne?*

Movies helped me through my youth. No one got me through the death of my mother when I was 15 more so than Arnold Schwarzenegger. *Predator* was a much needed everyday (yes every day) escape. Arnold was my Austrian therapist who eased the fear and pain of my mother's terminal illness, with his H-Bar, far more than any of the family counselors who only made my situation seem more stark and intense. As long as I had *Predator* in the machine, I was too busy on my alien-killing mission to watch my family disintegrate. Me and Jessie Ventura didn't have time to bleed.

You can tell a lot about a person by the movies they like. They say the eyes are the windows of the soul, but so is anybody's top-five movie list. If, for example, I were to have gone on a date with a woman who said, "I don't care what movie we see, as long as there's no subtitles," one could safely assume said date doesn't like to read anything at all and will probably in the near future break off your relationship for reasons involving your "chi." Get out while you're ahead. Way to go, movies! If you ever hear someone say *Titanic* is the best film he ever saw, you don't really need to hear him

say anything else, do you? It's like having a discussion on politics and someone saying, "George W. Bush was the most accountable, open, civic-minded president we've had in decades." You might as well stop there. You're dead to me.

Getting back to relationships, movies greatly helped me land my beautiful, blond, buxom wife, Alex. I've always had a freakish memory with an intracranial file cabinet of great film quotations to use on unsuspecting dates. I mean, I never said anything to her like, "Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, you walked into mine." Rather I used subtler stuff from lesser-known films, jokes mostly, to make up for my complete lack of handsomeness and creativity. She bought it all, hook line and sinker.

"I thought you were original," she now says in a glum, wed-locked voice.

Not in the least! High-five, movies!

## Hey, Michelangelo

Film as art is a strange subject for me. Nothing can create a cathartic experience for me quite like film. Yet, given the choice between being a famous novelist or filmmaker, I'd be a novelist, hands down. Why is this? I love films for their accessibility, but do I not take them as seriously as literature for the same reason? One thing is for certain: I've never wanted to be a film director. Every one of my favorite films – and I mean every one – has a horror story about how it was made. *Star Wars* was, right up to the final editing, a complete piece of shit. The special effects were initially not working properly, and the first edit was, apparently, horrendous. The filming became off-schedule and over-budget, giving Lucas terrible hypertension. Talented editors (including Lucas's then-wife, Marcia) pulled it together in the final hour to make it what it is. Marcia then promptly dumped Lucas for a younger guy.

*Blade Runner*, *Apocalypse Now*, *The Abyss* and a host of others are perfect examples of why not to get into filmmaking. Most movies, including many big budget ones, are filmed in four months. *Saving Private Ryan* was filmed in only 28 days. *The Abyss*, on the other hand, took nine months to film in a huge tank of cold water, with one actor or another nearly drowning on a daily basis. *Apocalypse*



*Now* took an entire year to film, with Francis Coppola having constant emotional collapses. He was convinced he was making a terrible film for most of the shoot. Ridley Scott's *Legend* burned down the entire James Bond sound stage in England. This building was so large you could have built a ballistic missile submarine in it. His previous film, *Blade Runner*, went over budget, over schedule, changed writers mid-stream, with Scott having to put up with two of the most priggish producers that ever walked. Jerry Perenchio and Bud Yorkin, to this very day, despite the masterpiece status of *Blade Runner*, give interviews stating that they can't understand why Scott had to shoot so many takes of certain scenes. Imagine two guys with expensive suits and gleaming white teeth watching Michelangelo from the floor of the Sistine Chapel, saying stuff like, "Why'd you use that color? Will you fuckin' hurry this along, please? I'm not payin' for any more paint." You get the picture. Producer Bud Yorkin, in a hilarious 2007 interview, states that "as a director myself," Scott's methods were infuriating him. Yorkin insinuates he is in the same company artistically as Ridley Scott. What is Bud Yorkin's own masterpiece, you might ask? *Arthur II*.

## Tied down

My 8-year-old daughter Juliet has the singular

challenge of having a father who is a film fanatic. I explain to her, as she watches *Stuart Little*, that this film was written by M. Night Shyamalan and Bruce Joel Rubin.

"You see, Julie, Shyamalan saw a meteoric rise to fame with the success of *The Sixth Sense*, but has since pulled a Joseph Heller with all subsequent efforts," I say. "Bruce Joel Rubin wrote such films as *Jacob's Ladder* and won the Oscar for writing *Ghost*, which was directed by *Airplane's* Jerry Zucker, of all people! Most Bruce Joel Rubin films are about death in some shape or form, so you can enjoy the humorous contrast of his writing *Stuart Little*."

Her eyes glaze over after a while, and sometimes she cries. However, more recently, I think I've made a breakthrough. I was watching *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and I had tied Juliet to a chair facing the screen. I was pointing out the magnificent photography of the late Jeffrey Unsworth and John Alcott as we watched several of the film's opening scenes.

"But," I conceded to her finally, as the ape-men screamed at the monolith, "you might find all this a little boring, being 8 and all."

And then the most extraordinary thing happened. Though still bound to her chair, she looked curiously at the jumping ape-men, and said, "No Dad, I don't."



# Real Change Comes in Aggregate

## Improving Cincinnati using loyalty and discontent

By ARIANA SHAHANDEH  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

*A response to comments over the CityBeat column, "Cincinnati is Just OK."*

On July 28 writer K. Bunthoff broke up with Cincinnati. In *CityBeat*'s weekly "Living Out Loud" column, in the format of a break up letter to Cincinnati, Bunthoff wrote, "I've been telling myself for years that you're a diamond in the rough. But let me be honest:

Your rough exterior really gets in the way of, well, whatever might be obscured beneath it." In an often bitingly

honest manner, the letter went on to describe the writer's targeted disappointments with the city. The unique interest of the column, however, was not so much in the content,

but in the reaction to the content.

This contribution to "Living Out Loud" became one of the most commented on pieces of the series. Where an empty comment section often followed past columns, displayed here, at the conclusion of this article, were more than five pages of impassioned responses.

"Cincinnati is not pretty?" one reader wrote. "Really? Not the skyline, the hills, or all the trees? How about the largest collection of Italianate architecture outside of Europe? What about Ault park, Fountain Square, Mt. Adams, Hyde Park, Clifton Gaslight?"

Many readers were turned off by the idea of complaining about the

is that the author was being part of the solution. And so was Sabu.

Clay Shirky, author of *Cognitive Surplus*, writes about the social effects of the Internet on society and how it can have civic value. He creates a definition of two types of Internet user: those who make and share LOLcats – images of kittens with captions added to make the pictures even more adorable – and those who don't. But the division boils down to something deeper.

"The real gap," he writes, "is between doing nothing and doing something, and someone making LOLcats has bridged that gap."

Shirky describes how our media landscape has evolved to allow us to become

more than just consumers. We can be producers. We can create and share. The Internet is not like the Television, an icon of the past one-sided media landscape. And what we do with

the time we used to spend just being consumers, the time we now spend creating and sharing, Shirky calls "cognitive surplus."

"One thing that makes the current age remarkable,"

**Shirky describes how our media landscape has evolved to allow us to become more than just consumers. We can be producers. We can create and share. The Internet is not like the Television, an icon of the past one-sided media landscape. And what we do with the time we used to spend just being consumers, the time we now spend creating and sharing.**

city's downfalls, without an initiative to change them.

"Instead of being part of the solution, you are part of the problem," wrote commenter Sabu. What Sabu might not realize, however,

he writes, "is that we can now treat free time as a general social asset that can be harnessed for large, communally created projects, rather than as a set of individual minutes to be whiled away one person at a time."

By commenting on Bunthoff's article online, reader Sabu was contributing to our cognitive surplus. And by submitting the article, so was Bunthoff.

Cincinnati, we need more of that. We need more contributions to our cognitive surplus. It doesn't have to exclusively be a comment on a news site. An example of Cincinnati's cognitive surplus is Secret Cincinnati, an online initiative to pool together tips from passionate Cincinnatians about the area's best undiscovered places. It started out as a Facebook group where people could leave wall messages with their tips. Soon the group grew so large, over 21,000 members, that the tips had no shelf life. The group's creators worked together over a weekend to build a Web site where the tips could be aggregated.

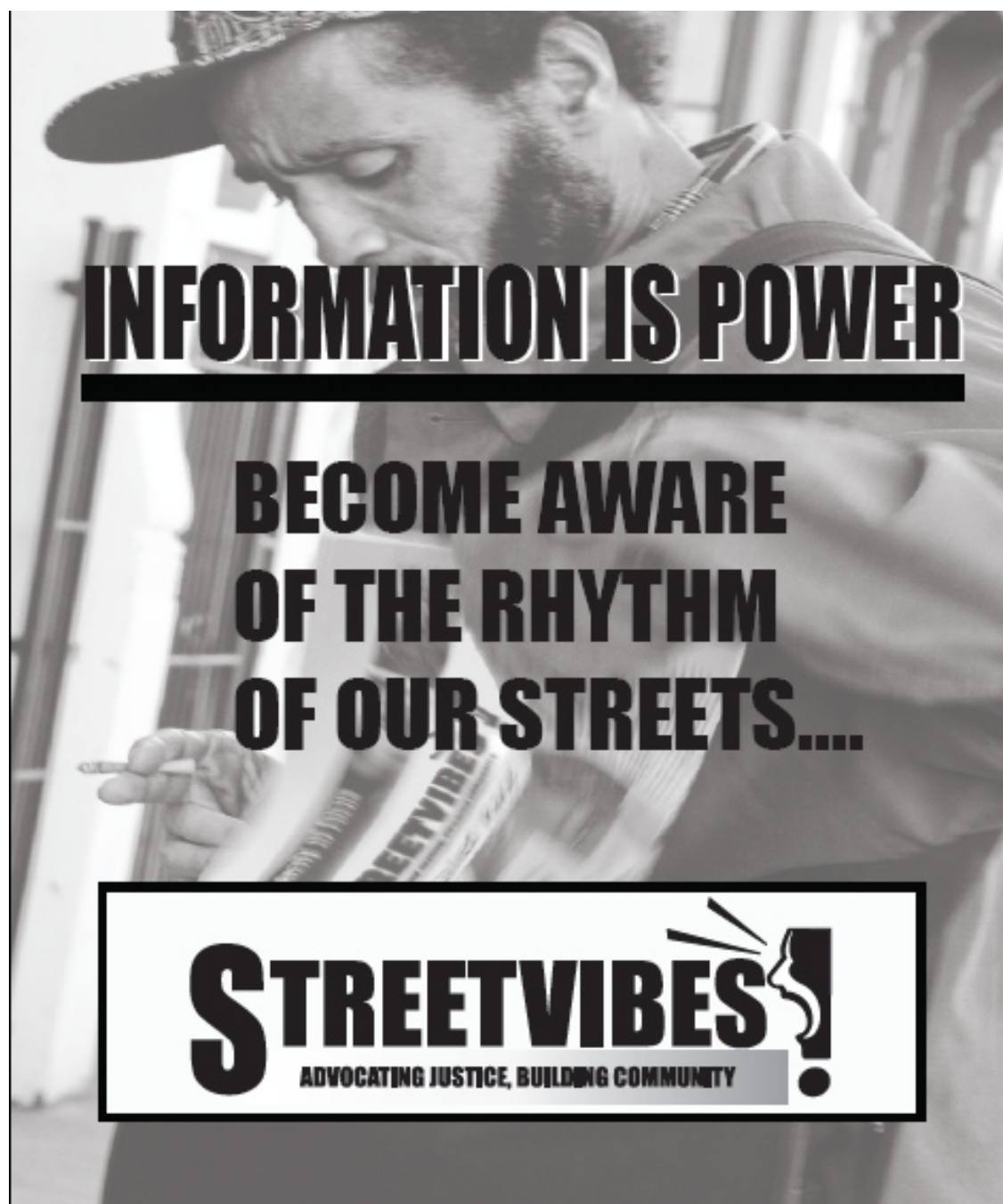
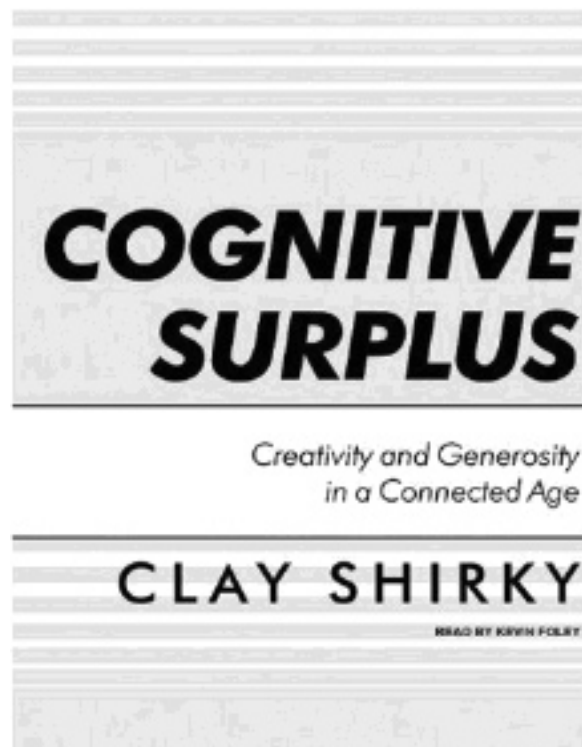
It might seem from these examples that a contribution, however small or frequent, comes from a place of affection. And that is true for much of it. But I noticed something ironically inspiring about the comments that followed Bunthoff's article. Scattered throughout the fiercely loyal comments were those of cautious agreement.

"There was a time that I loved Cincinnati," wrote one reader, who concluded, "Cincinnati is not trying, and I find it depressing and disappointing to realize, at least for me, this is as good

as it gets." Another reader wrote, "In my humble opinion, there is not enough good to outweigh the bad." These comments did not come from a place of affection, but they were still *something*. Those comments were still a contribution. Isn't it interesting that something supposedly so passive and uninspiring as discontent should provoke action?

What if we changed the way we used our new media opportunities to specifically contribute to our city's cognitive surplus? What if we created a sort of hyper-local cognitive surplus? Any time we use the Internet to participate, to produce, let's seek out those pockets of online activity that are unique to our city and a make a contribution. And if we can't find those pockets, we create them. For example, submitting content to be published on a local paper's Web site is creating a pocket. Commenting on that content is contributing to that pocket. Making a group on Facebook that aggregates tips on where to go in Cincinnati to enjoy the city is creating a pocket. Submitting a tip: contributing to the pocket.

Shirky writes in *Cognitive Surplus*, "Any shift, however minor, in the way we use a trillion hours of free time a year is likely to be a big deal." There are many ways to view the unexpected surge in comments over Bunthoff's article in an age where newspapers are dead and you're probably not even reading this. I saw it as an opportunity to collaborate our affection, and even our discontent, to make a positive difference for a city whose motto is "Juncta Juvant" – "Strength in Unity."





## A Gift of Sorrow

By WILLA D. JONES

There was love, peace and happiness on my side  
One man with me for twenty years, just my kind  
He had purposed to me three times all of which I said no  
Not knowing that time was running out for us as we go  
He became ill with high blood pressure and then had a stroke  
I had everything I needed but when he died he left me broke  
I went from the house, to the car and even the pool in the back  
To being homeless, eating trash and even smoking crack  
I tried living with people I knew back when times were good  
It would never last being a outcast and so misunderstood  
I tried homeless shelters with beds and eating solid food  
But shelters have curfews I was not for following the rule  
I found myself all alone hungry and sleeping in the street  
I lost everything, only the clothes on my back could I keep  
My grief for the lost of my man had turn to sorrow for myself  
I knew there was a lesson in this hand I had been dealt  
I started to pray and read the Bible all of the time  
Asking god to help me to soothe my aching mind  
I began to find strength with new feelings and new ideas  
I stopped smoking crack, drinking and got my head clear  
I went to a shelter for homeless addicts and prostitutes  
I found strength to bite my tongue and do what I had to do  
I went to A.A. and N.A. meetings and talked out loud  
To hear my story let me know the change was in the clouds  
I finally graduated and was able to rent my own room  
Got a job, got healthy and my spirit went up to the moon  
I started talking to the Lord in pray and song everyday  
And he turned my sorrow into a gift of life I'm proud to say  
So to have sorrow or feel pity on oneself all of the time  
Will take you nowhere but that wrong and narrow line  
You must look up and recognize where you need to be going  
And ask God to help you understand what it is you're sowing  
Just remember a gift of sorrow can be a very powerful lesson  
And as long as you have faith and believe in god's word can  
You then receive God's blessings

## A Friend

By WILLA D. JONES

To be called a friend is sometimes very hard to be  
To be a friend is a honor with many responsibilities  
To have a friend someone you can always depend on  
To have a friend with you even when all hope is gone  
Being human beings we all fall short of God's grace  
Being human plus a friend can be a difficult race  
Due to difficult circumstances in everyone's life  
To put trust and faith in someone can be only strife  
So for me I keep the faith and never forget to pray  
As I sing that old hymn what a friend we have in  
Jesus each and everyday

## The Recruit

By DAVID S. POINTER

told the  
senior drill  
not to skull  
fuck his  
future but,  
the senior  
brought the  
brim of his  
campaign  
cover down  
to break the  
boy's nose &  
the recruit  
brought his  
boot up  
polishing  
the seniors  
balls  
infirmary  
blue

## What's Up Economically

By DAVID S. POINTER

Like customers continuing to hold  
We never get any unsaturated answers  
To our important economic questions  
As each President is presented  
With a customized set of signature sentences  
To present a pacified public preoccupied  
With everything from Winnie the Pooh to internet  
Porn  
As the highly elevated  
Economically insane  
Continue to inhabit  
Love's lifelikeness  
Knowing collegiality  
Is a difficult contagion to detect.  
And what average consumer  
Can positively identify  
The clear ever increasing  
Kettle-cooked contaminant of commerce  
Made by modern chemists,  
Or that which is packaged  
To be as appealing as  
The double scarlet  
Day lily of a dream?



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# Learning a New Tune about the Reds

Almost time for a victory march

By **B. CLIFTON BURKE**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

So maybe these Reds aren't so bad after all. Earlier in the summer I wrote that I was skeptical the Reds would end up contenders, but that if it became late August and they were still in a pennant race, I would change my tune. Well, consider it changed.

In what has been a perfect storm of success this season, the Reds find themselves hunting a playoff spot for the first time since Al Leiter and the Mets blanked Cincinnati in a one-game playoff in 1999. There have been times this season that it appeared they were letting it slip away again, but this is a resilient group who specializes in come-from-behind wins and proving doubters wrong and have battled their way to the top of the NL Central standings.

There were many variables to the season that had to unfold in just the right way

for the Reds to make it this far. The starting pitching rotation has surpassed expectations, thanks to the development of young arms like Johnny Cueto and rookies Travis Wood and Mike Leake. Former ace Edinson Volquez continues to make his way back from Tommy John surgery; and while he has yet to consistently find his all-star stuff since returning, he still has stretches where he looks dominant. Bronson Arroyo, the staff's most veteran and consistent pitcher, has quietly put together one of his best seasons as a Red and has become something of an anchor to the rotation. Then there is Homer Bailey, who has also had arm troubles this year, but has pitched well and looked sharp since returning from his own rehab stint in the minors.

Another pleasant surprise has been the play of Brandon Phillips hitting from the lead-off spot. In years past, Phillips hit clean up and

appeared to swing for the fences on every swing. This season, he swings to simply make contact, and his batting average and on-base percentage have improved as a result. Thanks to Phillips making it safely to base so often, the phenomenal Joey Votto has enjoyed a windfall of success this year.

Votto is perhaps the best pure hitter to come from the Reds' farm system since Eric Davis in the late '80s, and his disciplined approach at the plate has him in the conversation not only for the league's MVP, but also for the hallowed triple crown, which hasn't been achieved by anyone since Carl Yastrzemski did it in 1967. The Reds line-up is pretty good on its own, but adding a gem like Votto makes it elite – and pitchers must always account for that devastating number-three hitter.

The man who hits behind Votto, Scott Rolen, has also enjoyed the all-star seasons of both Phillips and Votto. At times Rolen has shown his old age as he's been

hampered by a bad back, but his bat has produced more than what I thought the grizzled veteran was capable of when he's been in the line-up. He has provided the Reds with a nice option at the clean-up spot.

Others, like outfielder Jay Bruce, catchers Ramon Hernandez and Ryan Hannigan and utility infielder Miguel Cairo, have batting averages higher than expected and have nicely filled in as the team's supporting cast. The bullpen has hit a few bumps in the road along the way this year but has collectively put together a nice season, giving manager Dusty Baker one less thing to worry about.

All in all, the Reds have outdone themselves this season. For a team so ensconced in mediocrity for the past decade, fans can now look at each other in pleasant disbelief over the wins that continue to pile up. The division's only other threat, the St. Louis Cardinals, continue to push the Reds for a playoff

spot, but the Cards appear more beatable than in past seasons, and are having a tough month of August as well.

It all spells out Cincinnati baseball in October – once an annual event, but one that has become far less regular over the years. Whether the Reds can hang with the big dogs in a playoff tournament remains to be seen, but simply getting there is a major accomplishment. At this point, it would take a collapse of monumental proportions to miss out on such an accomplishment, but the Reds have given little reason for anyone to think such a letdown is imminent. There are still various concerns on the team – young outfielders striking out too much, starting pitching showing cracks and inconsistencies, veterans racking up injuries. But the fact remains that it's late August, and the Reds are in first place. Haven't said that in a while, and it feels good to admit. Hang tight; the finish line is near.

# What We See and What We Don't

Hurricanes, homelessness and other disasters

By **MICHELLE DILLINGHAM**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I had applied and was accepted into a graduate program for what I thought would be Jungian analysis – my first year I was stuck studying a bunch of post-Freudians.

One thing I remember was the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and his fascination with the “eye” and the “seer” and “being seen.” He would write stuff like, “The big Other designates radical alterity, an other-ness which transcends the illusory otherness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated through identification.” I recall feeling irritated by Lacan's writings, namely because I thought of myself as quite intelligent, yet I could not figure out what he was saying. My fascination with the concept of observer versus the observed is not lost, though, as I listen to an interview of a reporter tell his story of how he aimed his camera at people reaching out screaming for help in the flood waters of Katrina.

A new museum exhibit opens this week at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., between the White House and the Capitol Building. The Newseum

is a 250,000-square-foot museum of news. The exhibit, *Capturing Katrina*, focuses on the reporters' perspective of how they covered the tragic events of Hurricane Katrina five years ago. Two local newspapers – *The Times-Picayune* in New Orleans and the *Sun Herald* of Biloxi and Gulfport, Miss. – shared the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for public service for their Katrina coverage. A journalist from one of the papers talked about how they were not simply covering a story; they were experiencing the same loss as those they observed. Their offices were flooded and communications severed yet they continued to report on what was going on.

From the Newseum's press release about the exhibit: “*Capturing Katrina* will explore a cross-section of themes related to hurricane coverage: reporting made risky by angry mobs and armed looters; logistical challenges including power outages, disrupted phone service and impassable roads; ethical choices between reporting the story or rescuing victims; and the vital role of news websites in providing essential information to residents. The exhibit also examines the national news media's role in shining a spotlight

on the horrific conditions facing residents and the government's slow response to the disaster.”

As I listen to the journalist being interviewed on the radio about the exhibit, I thought of the power of the media that can reveal stories that so often go untold. Recently a woman told me she had heard about the number of homeless people in Cincinnati, but she just didn't really see it, and she really did not grasp the scope of the problem. In about 10 minutes I rattled off a number of points about a decreasing and increasingly dilapidated affordable housing stock, the lack of housing for people who work in minimum-wage jobs such as security guards and food service workers, the fact that the wait list for the voucher program at Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority has not been opened up for four years and that the few family shelters in Cincinnati have wait lists as well.

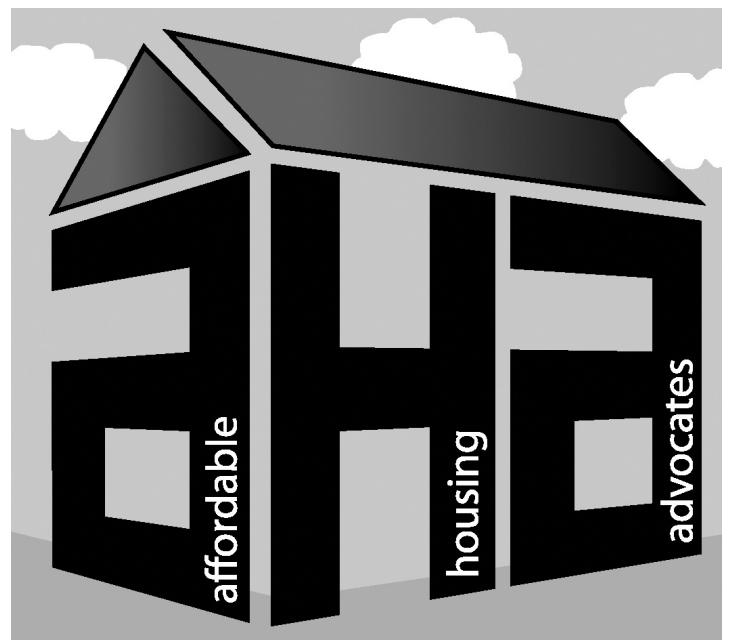
Street papers like *Streetvibes* offer a forum to express perspectives that are often not covered by mainstream media. Experiences such as being homeless, being young and aging out of the foster-care system and having to

find housing and being an advocate against what seems like a sea-wave of talking heads can all be reflected here.

Affordable Housing Advocates (AHA) recognizes the importance of imagery and perception as we advocate for our mission of ensuring good, safe, accessible, affordable housing for all people in the Cincinnati region. We are inundated with negative stereotypes that are perpetuated about people who are homeless, about people who live in subsidized housing, about working families who rely on housing subsidies to survive.

The Katrina exhibit shows side by side two news articles, one a light-skinned group of men wading into a store – the headline says they have “found food,” while a similar photo of dark-skinned individuals says they are “looting.”

As advocates, we know imagery is powerful – both visual and in written word. AHA is currently working on securing funds to help develop public education materials. Please let us know of any resources to support our effort, and help us continue to “keep it real.” Contact AHA, 117 E. 14th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.





# Health Reform: What’s in it for the Low/No-Income Uninsured?

By **BARBARA DiPIETRO**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

With all the screaming and sign-waving and political ugliness, it was hard for anyone not to be turned off to the details of the health-reform debate. People were sure the sky would fall if it passed and that the country would turn into a socialist police state. Alas, pass it did; and last time I checked, the sky was still there, and there are still few signs of socialism.

So now that the dust is settling, what’s in it that impacts low/no-income folks and those health-care providers who treat them? The good news: a bunch of stuff. The bad news: You have to wait for it.

The biggest-ticket item is an expansion of Medicaid, the health-insurance program that mostly serves low-income women, children, senior citizens in nursing homes and those who are disabled. Right now most adults without small children don’t qualify for Medicaid, even if they’re sick. There are a few exceptions in some areas like Washington, D.C., and Massachusetts, which have local programs that help pay for medical care, but there’s never been one standard across the country for Medicaid to

cover single adults. The health-reform law expands Medicaid to everyone earning less than 133 percent of the federal poverty level – about \$14,400 a year if you’re single.

Unfortunately, the Medicaid expansion doesn’t go into effect until Jan. 1, 2014, so most low/no-income people without health insurance have to wait three and a half more years until they can qualify for health insurance. Individual states can choose to expand their Medicaid programs

newly enrolled in Medicaid, depending on the strength of the outreach and enrollment efforts. While we are waiting to get people enrolled, states are busy trying to prepare their systems to handle the influx of enrolling so many new people. Not only does this mean doing some repairs and upgrades to the information technology (IT) systems, but it also means we need more doctors, nurses, dentists and other providers to be available to see all these new patients. There is a shortage of primary care

primary-care providers in underserved communities. The law also addresses the shortage of nurses by developing incentives and a career path for nursing, loan repayment and retention grants (which will increase the capacity for education) and training programs. Throughout these initiatives, training programs are crafted that focus on primary care models such as medical homes, team management of chronic disease and programs that integrate physical and mental health

services. The hope is that a small army of doctors, nurses and other providers can be developed in the next few years to meet the health needs of so many people who need care. Likewise, there’s also a need to expand community health centers so that there’s a place for about 20 million new patients to go and receive services. Community health centers are community-based and patient-directed organizations that serve populations with limited access to health care. These include low-income populations, the uninsured, those with limited English proficiency, migrant and seasonal farm workers, individuals and families experiencing homelessness and those living in public housing. To provide for the needs of these clinics, the health-reform law dedicates \$11 billion for community health centers over the next both years for both operating and capital needs. The operating funding will expand services that include dental, addiction, mental health and primary care while the capital funding will help construct new sites where there is a need for them. Health Care for the Homeless projects will receive nearly 10 percent of the funding so these service sites will be expanding significantly to meet the specialized needs of this population.

These three components –Medicaid expansion, workforce development and growth in community health centers – are major parts of the law that will impact people with low/no income. Today many who fall into this category are uninsured. Tomorrow that will likely still be the case in many areas. But on Jan. 1, 2014, major things start happening as millions can start enrolling in Medicaid. Until then, there’s a lot to be done to prepare.

*Barbara DiPietro is director of policy for the National Health Care for the Homeless Council.*

**Projections are that between 16 million and 23 million people will be newly enrolled in Medicaid, depending on the strength of the outreach and enrollment efforts. While we are waiting to get people enrolled, states are busy trying to prepare their systems to handle the influx of enrolling so many new people. Not only does this mean doing some repairs and upgrades to the information technology (IT) systems, but it also means we need more doctors, nurses, dentists and other providers to be available to see all these new patients. There is a shortage of primary care doctors and nurses of all kinds around the country, so there’s a lot of work to be done, and the health-reform law recognizes that.**

early (Connecticut already has), but with the budgets tight, it’s unlikely states can afford that just yet. The good news for state budget directors is that the federal government will pay 100 percent of the cost for the newly eligible for the first couple of years, reducing the federal share to 90 percent by 2019.

Projections are that between 16 million and 23 million people will be

doctors and nurses of all kinds around the country, so there’s a lot of work to be done, and the health-reform law recognizes that.

To build this workforce, the law invests \$1.5 billion over five years in the National Health Service Corps, which helps provide scholarships and loans to medical students willing to work extra years in high-needs areas. The goal is to fund an estimated 15,000

centers so that there’s a place for about 20 million new patients to go and receive services. Community health centers are community-based and patient-directed organizations that serve populations with limited access to health care. These include low-income populations, the uninsured, those with limited English proficiency, migrant and seasonal farm workers, individuals and families

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<b><u>Shelter: Women and Children</u></b>					
<b>Central Access Point</b>	381-SAFE		<b>St. Francis Soup Kitchen</b>	535-2719	
<b>Cincinnati Union Bethel</b>	768-6907		<b>Churches Active in Northside</b>	591-2246	
300 Lytle Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202			4230 Hamilton Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45223		
<b>Bethany House</b>	557-2873		<b>FreeStore/FoodBank</b>	241-1064	
1841 Fairmount Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45214			112 E. Liberty Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202		
<b>Grace Place Catholic Worker House</b>	681-2365		<b>Madisonville Ed &amp; Assistance Center</b>	271-5501	
6037 Cary Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45224			4600 Erie Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45227		
<b>Salvation Army</b>	762-5660		Serves area codes: 45226, 45227, 45208, 45209		
131 E. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202			<b>St. Vincent de Paul</b>	562-8841	
<b>YWCA Battered Women’s Shelter</b>	872-9259		1125 Bank Street, Cinti, Ohio 45214		
<b><u>Shelter: Men</u></b>			<b><u>Treatment: Men</u></b>		
<b>City Gospel Mission</b>	241-5525		<b>Charlie’s 3/4 House</b>	784-1853	
1419 Elm Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202			2121 Vine Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202		
<b>Justice Watch</b>	241-0490		<b>Prospect House</b>	921-1613	
<b>St. Fran/St. Joe Catholic Work. House</b>	381-4941		682 Hawthorne Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45205		
1437 Walnut Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202			<b>Starting Over</b>	961-2256	
<b>Mt. Airy Shelter</b>	661-4620		<b><u>Treatment: Women</u></b>		
<b><u>Shelter: Both</u></b>			<b>First Step Home</b>	961-4663	
<b>Anthony House (Youth)</b>	961-4080		2203 Fulton, Cinti, Ohio 45206		
2728 Glendora Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45209			<b><u>Treatment: Both</u></b>		
<b>Caracole (HIV/AIDS)</b>	761-1480		<b>AA Hotline</b>	351-0422	
1821 Summit Road, Cinti, Ohio 45237			<b>CCAT</b>	381-6672	
<b>Drop Inn Center</b>	721-0643		830 Ezzard Charles Dr. Cinti, Ohio 45214		
217 W. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202			<b>Joseph House (Veterans)</b>	241-2965	
<b>Interfaith Hospitality Network</b>	471-1100		1522 Republic Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202		
<b>Lighthouse Youth Center (Youth)</b>	221-3350		<b>Hamilton County ADAS Board</b>	946-4888	
3330 Jefferson, Cinti, Ohio 45220			<b>Recovery Health Access Center</b>	281-7422	
<b><u>Housing:</u></b>			<b>Sober Living</b>	681-0324	
<b>CMHA</b>	721-4580		<b>Talbert House</b>	641-4300	
<b>Excel Development</b>	632-7149		<b><u>Advocacy</u></b>		
<b>OTR Community Housing</b>	381-1171		<b>Catholic Social Action</b>	421-3131	
114 W. 14th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202			<b>Community Action Agency</b>	569-1840	
<b>Tender Mercies</b>	721-8666		<b>Contact Center</b>	381-4242	
27 W. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202			1227 Vine Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202		
<b>Tom Geiger House</b>	961-4555		<b>Franciscan JPIC</b>	721-4700	
<b>Dana Transitional Bridge Services</b>	751-0643		<b>Gr. Cinti Coalition for the Homeless</b>	421-7803	
<b>Volunteers of America</b>	381-1954		117 E. 12th Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202		
<b>Anna Louise Inn</b>	421-5211		<b>Intercommunity Justice &amp; Peace Cr.</b>	579-8547	
<b><u>Food/Clothing</u></b>			<b>Legal Aid Society</b>	241-9400	
<b>Lord’s Pantry</b>	621-5300		<b>Ohio Justice &amp; Policy Center</b>	421-1108	
<b>OTR/Walnut Hills Kitchen &amp; Pantry</b>	961-1983		<b>Faces Without Places</b>	363-3300	
OTR: 1620 Vine Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202			<b>Stop AIDS</b>	421-2437	
Walnut Hills: 2631 Gilbert, Cinti, Ohio 45206			<b><u>Health</u></b>		
<b>Our Daily Bread</b>	621-6364		<b>Center for Respite Care</b>	621-1868	
1730 Race Street, Cinti, Ohio 45202			3550 Washington Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45229		
			<b><u>Crossroad Health Center</u></b>		
			5 E. Liberty St. Cinti, Ohio 45202	381-2247	
			<b>Health Resource Center</b>	357-4602	
			<b>Homeless Mobile Health Van</b>	352-2902	
			<b>McMicken Dental Clinic</b>	352-6363	
			40 E. McMicken Ave, Cinti, Ohio 45202		
			<b>Mental Health Access Point</b>	558-8888	
			<b>Mercy Franciscan at St. John</b>	981-5800	
			1800 Logan St. Cinti, Ohio 45202		
			<b>NAMI of Hamilton County</b>	458-6670	
			<b>PATH Outreach</b>	977-4489	
			<b><u>Other Resources</u></b>		
			<b>Center Independent Living Options</b>	241-2600	
			<b>Emmanuel Community Center</b>	241-2563	
			1308 Race St. Cinti, Ohio 45202		
			<b>Peaslee Neighborhood Center</b>	621-5514	
			214 E. 14th St. Cinti, Ohio 45202		
			<b>Franciscan Haircuts from the Heart</b>	381-0111	
			1800 Logan St. Cinti, Ohio 45202		
			<b>Goodwill industries</b>	771-4800	
			<b>Healing Connections</b>	751-0600	
			<b>Mary Magdalen House</b>	721-4811	
			1223 Main St. Cinti, Ohio 45202		
			<b>People Working Cooperatively</b>	351-7921	
			<b>The Caring Place</b>	631-1114	
			<b>United Way</b>	211	
			<b>Women Helping Women</b>	977-5541	
			<b>Off The Streets</b>	421-5211	
			<b><u>Hamilton/Middletown</u></b>		
			<b>St. Raephaels</b>	863-3184	
			<b>Salvation Army</b>	863-1445	
			<b>Serenity House Day Center</b>	422-8555	
			<b>Open Door Pantry</b>	868-3276	
			<b><u>Northern Kentucky</u></b>		
			<b>Brighton Center</b>	859-491-8303	
			799 Ann St. Newport, KY		
			<b>ECHO/Hosea House</b>	859-261-5857	
			<b>Fairhaven Resuce Mission</b>	859-491-1027	
			<b>Homeward Bound Youth</b>	859-581-1111	
			<b>Mathews House</b>	859-261-8009	
			<b>Homeless &amp; Housing Coalition</b>	859-727-0926	
			<b>Parish Kitchen</b>	859-581-7745	
			<b>Pike St. Clinic</b>	859-291-9321	
			<b>Transitions, Inc</b>	859-491-4435	
			<b>Welcome House of NKY</b>	859-431-8717	
			205 West Pike Street, Covington, KY 41011		
			<b>Women’s Crisis Center</b>	859-491-3335	
			<b>VA Domiciliary</b>	859-559-5011	
			<b>VA Homeless</b>	859-572-6226	

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# Freaks and Other Artists

Bill Ross, Keith Banner celebrate possibility

Influenced by Flannery O'Connor's works, which always gave voice to those who were shunned, Keith Banner, a well-published Cincinnati writer, started in his mid-20s to write about freaks. They are, in his words, "forms of our essential displacement."

"Putting the reader in the point of view and body of someone who is denigrated and marginalized is always a deliberate political move," Banner says. "It is my way to make the reader identify and connect with the other, accept and humanize the other despite the difference, realize we're all equal and beautiful, that the world is bigger than we are, and that we need to be at peace with each other."

"Art saved and shaped my life," says Bill Ross, a well-exhibited local artist. "It helped me find out who I was, also what was my mission. It let me explore social venues I would not have otherwise. It empowered me, and through collaborative work, allowed me to empower others."

Ross and Banner met in the early 1980s, studying art at the Herron School of Art and Design, at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Ross graduated with a degree in painting, Banner shifting later to English and graduating in

legacy alive.

Professionally, both Ross and Banner applied their art background to the field of social work. They worked in group homes, mostly with mentally handicapped individuals, providing them care and managing their needs. Artists at heart, they merged art with social work, combining and enhancing the powerful effects of both.

"We are culture workers and not only social workers," they say. "We use our artistic skills to help individuals grow and develop."

This is how Ross one day discovered Thunder-Sky and his wonderful creative world. At a meeting set up to discuss his health concerns, Thunder-Sky brought along a tool box that he opened with a smile; it contained hundreds of his amazing drawings, unseen until then. A disabled Native American and gifted artist, Thunder-Sky would always dress in a clown collar and construction hat and walk the streets of Cincinnati drawing demolition and construction sites.

Ross and Banner quickly organized a show of his drawings in 2000. This opened the gate to many other disabled artists, starting with Antonio Adams, now a well known and well represented Cincinnati artist. It also led to the progressive establishment of a venue for individuals with disability to explore and develop their artistic talent at the same time using their creative expression for their well-being. This venue, later known as Visionaries and Voices, gave artists ownership in an inclusive environment where they felt valued, a chance to create and show their work, an opportunity to collaborate and celebrate with other community members.

Five years later, to avoid potential conflict of interest with its source of funding, Banner and Ross left the then well established Visionaries and Voices and immersed their energy in the creation of a new gallery, Thunder-Sky Inc. The new gallery focuses on art, exhibitions and literary publications; it is meant as a collaborative, non-segregated space where both disabled and non-disabled artists work side by side, with no real difference, triggering each other's vulnerability and letting go of their ego.

All along and despite their otherwise heavy engagements, Banner and Ross continued their own creative endeavors.

Ross painted non-stop. His paintings – surrealistic, fantastic, personal at the beginning – changed their focus few years ago; it became collaborative, with disabled artists creating composition and content and Ross adding pattern, colors and depth.

"Collaboration took me to places I was not able to go on my own," he says. "It also helped build confidence in the disabled artists showing them someone else takes them seriously."

Ross has since collaborated with six disabled artists, among them Kevin White, known for his elegant



Bill Ross and Keith Banner stand in front of text paintings by Dale Jackson. Saad Ghosn.

designs; Mike Weber, for his abstracted images; and Donald Henry, for his robot versions of himself and his friends.

*Amazing Chaos* is a collaborative piece Ross did with Becky Iker, who has Down syndrome. With minor editing, Ross shaped in color Iker's pencil drawing, the final result reminiscent of a cave painting with its mystery and hidden subtleties.

While Ross was painting, Banner kept writing. He published several short stories and a novel, all with strong social messages. He is working on a new novel relating the death of a 7-year-old disabled girl killed by her stepbrother. Ignored, pushed away and debased while alive, her sudden disappearance makes everyone realize her inner beauty, her true innocence, how much she touched each of them. Meant as an empowerment of the weak and rejected, the work stresses the importance of every individual, even those initially perceived as useless and insignificant.

In *The Wedding of Tom and Tom*, from his book *The Smallest People Alive*, Banner tells the story of two disabled gentlemen living in a group home, in love with each other. Caregivers, braving the rules of the agency running the home, assist them to get married. The story reflects Banner's rejection of rules, codes and regulations that negate the human essence and mar its potentials, imprison the individual, obstruct his good and poetic nature. It ends with a liberating act, the vision of hundreds of stigmatized individuals running over the official to get to their freedom place, a celebration of universal spirit asserting itself and coming to life.

Both Ross and Banner use their own art and various art involvements to equalize people and link them together.

"Society wants to frame us and categorize us," they say. "One is retarded or not, intelligent or not. ... One's free potential as human being is often ignored. We want to make it hard to categorize and differentiate people; it is our political statement, and art helps us achieve it."

## The Officiator at The Wedding of Tom and Tom:

"Pink light, like exploding roses. The red-light district. Ha ha. No. A stampede ... I am on the other side and I look up and all these shaved-headed people are running right at me in the red light. It's like they just got freed, you know? Like the concentration camp just opened its doors and they got out and they're running ... They're coming right at me. And I want that to happen ... I want them to run me over," he says, looking right at Tom A. and Tom B. "And they do. They stomp all over me. They gotta get somewhere, don't they?"

(from *The Smallest People Alive*, by Keith Banner)



*Amazing Chaos*, collaborative pencil and acrylic painting on wood panel by Becky Iker and Bill Ross. Bob Sheadler.